



California Department of Veterans Affairs

NEWS FOR VETERANS

Contact: Robert Glazier
Jerry Jones
Jaime Arteaga
Legislation and Public Affairs
916-653-2192
Fax 916-653-2611
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A MESSAGE FROM THE "STORIES OF SERVICE" CALIFORNIA PROJECT

2005 California "Network of Service" Kickoff and Rally in Old Town Sacramento

On Tuesday, March 29, 2005, the **STORIES of SERVICE-California** Project Team will meet in Sacramento to officially announce a year-long campaign to commemorate the end of World War II by establishing a State wide "Network of Service" that will be a living legacy to honor the memory of America's Greatest Generation. California Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Tom Johnson will attend to deliver some remarks. We invite youth and adult volunteers, veterans and supporters from our ten program sites to join us for this historic occasion and to take this opportunity to meet each other in our State capital as we prepare for a national "Summer of Service," beginning in June.

SCHEDULE of ACTIVITIES

1:00 PM California Military Museum 1119 Second St.

- Presentation by Brig. Gen. Donald Mattson and tour of Museum exhibits

2:00 PM California Military Museum

- Oral history interview conducted by Lisa Daniels, Director, Unsung Heroes, and Robert Corpus, Youth Project Director, STORIES of SERVICE-California, under direction of Bill Davies, Librarian, CMM

3:00 PM STORIES of SERVICE Kickoff & Rally

- Welcome to Sacramento from AMVETS and DAV
- Comments by CDVA Secretary Tom Johnson
- Presentation of California Senate Resolution in support of STORIES of SERVICE by Senator Bill Morrow, Chairman, State Senate Veterans Affairs Committee and comments by AMVETS and Disabled American Veterans.
- Group tours of "Freedom" Yacht courtesy Monterey Bay Veterans
- Announcement of project plans for coming year by STORIES of SERVICE National Director
- Networking among participants
- Photo opportunities and interviews with press

5:00 PM Group dinner in Downtown Sacramento

- Location TBA Estimated cost \$10

For more information contact Brandon Wright, State Coordinator, at 559.355.7740. You may also wish to visit the Stories of Service website at www.stories-of-service.org.

MEMORIAL DAY 2005 EVENTS

Please continue to report your organization's Memorial Day 2005 Events to the California Department of Veterans Affairs for inclusion in a Memorial Day 2005 Event Calendar. This online calendar will be made available closer to the event. Email the information for your event to newsforveterans@cdva.ca.gov.

Thank You

NEWS FROM THE USDVA

FISH OIL HOLDS PROMISE IN ALZHEIMER'S FIGHT

WASHINGTON (March 23, 2005) - Even our grandmothers told us fish was "brain food" -- and now scientists have evidence to back the claim.

Researchers with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) found that a diet high in docosahexenoic acid, or DHA -- an omega-3 fatty acid found in relatively high concentrations in cold-water fish -- dramatically slowed the progression of Alzheimer's disease in mice. Specifically, DHA cut the harmful brain plaques that mark the disease. The results appear in the March 23 online edition of the Journal of Neuroscience.

Senior author Greg M. Cole, Ph.D., a neuroscientist at the Greater Los Angeles VA Healthcare System and UCLA, said that unlike many studies with mice, this one points to the benefits of a therapy that is easily available and already touted for other medical conditions. DHA -- either from food sources such as fish and soy, or in fish-oil supplements -- is recommended by many cardiologists for heart health, based on scores of previous studies.

"The good news from this study is that we can buy the therapy at a supermarket or drug store," said Cole. "DHA has a tremendous safety profile -- essentially no side effects-and clinical trial evidence supports giving DHA supplements to people at risk for cardiovascular disease."

The new study involved older mice genetically altered to develop Alzheimer's disease. The researchers fed one group of the mice DHA-fortified chow. The control mice ate a normal or DHA-depleted diet. After three to five months -- the equivalent of several years in human biology -- the high-DHA group had 70-percent less buildup of amyloid protein in the brain. This sticky protein makes up the plaques, or patches, that are a hallmark of Alzheimer's.

A similar study by Cole's group published in Neuron last fall showed that DHA protected against damage to the "synaptic" areas where brain cells communicate and enabled mice to perform better on memory tests.

The studies, say the scientists, suggest that even people who are genetically predisposed to the disease may be able to delay it by boosting their DHA intake.

Omega-3 fatty acids, typically deficient in the American diet, are essential for human health. DHA in particular is vital to proper brain function, as well as eye health and other body processes. In recent years epidemiologists have tied fish-rich diets to a lower incidence of Alzheimer's disease and homed in on DHA as the preventive factor. Omega-3 fatty acid supplements are now being tested in clinical trials with early-stage Alzheimer's patients in the United States, Canada and Sweden to see if the therapy

really slows the disease.

Food sources of omega-3 fatty acids include fish such as salmon, halibut, mackerel and sardines, as well as almonds, walnuts, soy, and DHA -- enriched eggs. Concerns about mercury contamination in fish have helped popularize purified DHA supplements based on fish oil or algae.

Last year, Cole's team identified another nutrient that appears to combat Alzheimer's plaques in mice: curcumin, the yellow pigment in turmeric, one of the spices that make up curry powder. Researchers became interested in curcumin's potential to prevent or treat Alzheimer's disease after noting the low prevalence of dementia among the elderly in India, where curry is a staple.

Cole is the associate director for research at VA's Los Angeles-based Geriatric Research, Education and Clinical Center, and a professor of medicine and neurology at UCLA. Lead author for the new study was Giselle P. Lim, PhD, a UCLA postgraduate researcher in Cole's group. Working with them were colleagues from VA, UCLA and the National Institutes of Health. The study was supported by the National Institute on Aging, VA, the Alzheimer's Association, and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research.

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